

## June 2013 Overview

### Shasta-Trinity Crew

By: Steven Tsourovakas

June brought forth warm winds of change for the Shasta-Trinity Backcountry Crew. The month proved to be full of new and exciting work and adventures for the whole group. From cross cutting, to rock work, Big Bear Lake to Canyon Lake, lessons were learned. Fun was had on our first real month; loving, working, learning, teaching and exploring in the backcountry.

Shasta-T's first look at the Alps came on a weekend trip to Big Bear Lake, the former camp of our own C 1 Julian. Julian's excitement at being "home" instantly rubbed off on the whole crew and set the pace for an awesome weekend. The hike was roughly 6 miles from the trail-head to the lake. It was our first chance to hike at elevation, and it proved very tough. Many of us live at/or below sea -level, so the sudden change from Big Basin to the Alps certainly took its toll on us. Still, the whole crew thrived and had a fantastic inaugural weekend of hiking, fishing and lounging in the Big Bear Lake area.

For the first four days of work, the crew was hosted at the forest service barn that housed our mule strings. We want to thank the forest service and our packers for their kind words of encouragement. While staying at the barn we had our first class on cross-cutting with the former Lee Bundy! Lee was kind enough to show us the ropes and teach us some of the history of cross-cutting before heading out on the grade to log-out the East Weaver Trail. Thank you Lee!

We spent three days of steep terrain that would serve as our intro to working in the Trinity Alps. Although, the crew was anxious to move into camp and get out into the backcountry, everyone really enjoyed the stay at the barn and the work at East Weaver.

The following day, camp move proved for many to be the most challenging hike we had yet. Not because the terrain was tough, no, we've hiked steeper trails, but because it was our first extended hike with all of our gear. Many of us were carrying two packs, one on the front and one on the back. So adjusting to an opossum carry was a task on its own. The hike was a slow climb over 7 miles of the trail we would soon find ourselves doing maintenance runs, re-routes, and rock work.

We arrived at camp on a Monday and spent the next two days setting up. We had crews designated to building the kitchen, digging the sump and outhouse, building a day pack rack, and collecting firewood. Within two days the stress of building camp began to subside and the crew started to settle into what would become our home for one month of the season.

Life in the backcountry is different from the life in the front country; the same goes for work. Working at Big Basin is very different from working and living in the Alps. The health concerns are greater, the safety concerns are greater, communication is more restricted, and contact with people outside of your crew is extremely limited. The list goes on and on. Backcountry living is extremely tough and not for everyone. Unfortunately, our crew lost a member about three weeks into June. Tim Williams left the

crew and the season for personal reasons. As a community we were able to overcome this challenge together and to move on with our season. We want to wish Tim all the best and good luck in the future.

The days are long and hard and the nights no different. Some weeks seem as though they might never end. In that way, some people cannot wait for the weekend to arrive. Freedom! Freedom from camp, from work, from schedule! Our weekend trips vary from group to group. Sometimes there are groups that don't want to stay too far from camp, that just want to relax and take in the beauty of the Alps from creek side. Other times groups are more restless. They need excitement and adventure! While at Canyon creek our crew got to experience one of the most beautiful parts of the Alps. On the weekend we went up and down the creek, to quiet sides to relax, or for the lakes to fish and explore. Some of the crew summited Mount Hilton. At approximately 8,900ft it is the second tallest peak in the Alps! By the time our second camp move arrived almost the whole crew had managed to fit all of the lakes into their weekend trips. Don't worry though; those who hadn't will have a second chance when we return to Canyon Creek in September!

While out in the backcountry, we were blessed with visitors! Lee Bundy stayed with us for a week of work on the trail and more cross-cutting lessons. Lee also helped us to make our campsite safer by cutting down any snags that the crew couldn't handle on their own. Thanks again Lee! After Lee took off, our very own Program Director, Karlson Hubbard, came out for a day on the grade and a night in camp. Although the crew wishes it was a longer visit, they were thrilled by the surprise visit, and want to take Karlson for an awesome PT, all of his help on the grade, and for his words of wisdom. Thank you Karlson! After Karlson left, the crew got a night's lesson from the Forest Service's Jim Holmes. Jim runs the volunteers of the Trinity Alps wilderness patrol. They are responsible for maintaining the 600+ campsite here in the Alps. Quite the task! Jim was kind enough to come into camp and give the crew some insight into what it is he and the volunteers do and to how critical it is to the Alps. In addition to that, Jim led the crew in a thought provoking discussion about cooperation within nature. From all of us here on the Shasta-T backcountry crew, thank you Jim!

Our curriculum doesn't always include guest speakers though, often times they include wilderness survival skills or orientating classes given by our C 1, Julian. Or, like recently, there are personal bios given by 1 crew member a night. In the past couple of weeks the crew has had the opportunity to hear bios given by both Christian and Hannah. Luckily for the rest of us, these two also taught us a class on communication. Hannah's class focused on conflict management and appropriate ways of dealing with crew issues. On the other hand Christian's class on communication centered on teamwork. Through a variety of exercise, both crew members taught us more effective ways of communicating our issues to one another and problem-solving, as well as how to work more safely when on the grade. Thank you to Hannah and Christian, and to all the other crewmembers who have been so willing to tell us about their personal lives and so eager to teach us new skills!

June has been a great month for the Shasta Trinity Crew. As a trail crew, we have started to really come together on the grade. Individually, we know what our responsibilities are and what needs to be done and how to do it. If our productivity this month is any indication of where we are headed, great things are coming to the Alps! As a community we have had our ups and downs, but are strong as one. We

have grown to be able to depend on one another and to work together to problem solve. Everyone has their place and plays it well, but we are learning our lesson hard and learning them every day. There will always be room to improve, but for now the crew is excited for our new camp and looking forward in and playing in a new part of the Trinity Alps. The Stuart Fork!

Special thanks to John Goodwin for your quick visit and wisdom. Thanks for the ice cream sandwiches, we ate them with pancakes!

### Mission Statement

We're conceded. Let down the construction and comforts that once supported our definitions of normal. Now, here in the wilderness, we digest the raw world as it is. We volunteer ourselves to its majesty for reasons still unknown to both us and it. Some say service, challenge, experience, or passion but how could we have known? Our prior selves are changing. Perhaps like a stone in a creek or a log under decay. Or maybe like a mountain that does not know if it's sinking or rising. What is most apparent is continuity. As a group, we struggle through canyons and each other. Exploring, not only the precipices and ravines of our granite home, but those of ourselves, discovering shortfalls and towering attributes. We can see how the forest propels itself and now we join it in a process not unsimilar. The bruises and half-healed cuts are a reflection of our internal struggle. Regardless of what brought us here, we are now part of the Alps. A conscious entity that welds a rather curious obligation to the niche it now belongs.

### Symbolic Declaration:

We will place each foot in front of the other until we leave our breath behind. It's had our whole lives to remain regular. We will push rock and wood over one another until they're in an agreeable order. Trail does not make itself. We will hug, cry, laugh and high five. This is what awesome people do. We will explore mountain top and gully alike. As non-passive consumers of ancient events, we will work with fierce momentum and meaning. Our product is brand name, eco-friendly, and lifetime guaranteed. We will help one another. Living long and prospering is a communal undertaking. We will spend time to reflect. The wilderness is perfect for thinking and being outside of a box. And lastly, as a very Benzo'd Tim Williams once said, we will hump ass. To do something half-assed does not want to do it at all.

This season in the Alps is an individual group effort. We abolish ideas of grandeur from our old lifestyle in favor of the new. Our intention is to take the rain with the sun, isolation with intimacy and forge these stories, triumphs, and failures that we learned in the wilderness and return to the world from whence we came.